

Learning From Other's Grief

We all experience loss for which we grieve. This is, unfortunately, part of being human. While we each grieve our losses in our own way there are some common elements to the grieving and healing process.

Because the losses we experience are often overwhelming it can be helpful to hear about other's losses and how they healed from the pain of their loss. People seek out information, insight, understanding and methods of coping in a variety of settings. A frequent setting is the support group held in a number of locations, Churches, hospitals, Hospice programs, Senior Centers.

Equally helpful is learning about other's experiences through books and by watching movies. Sometimes a particularly helpful written story will be made into a film. There are several advantages to reading a story; 1) You can read and process the information at your own pace 2) You can re-read particularly meaningful passages 3) You can take notes or even mark passages in the book 4) You can share the story with others.

Both Children and adults benefit from reading stories about specific types of loss. Families can read a book or short story together thus supporting each other and sharing their grief and healing. Discussing the story read and sharing own feelings in relation to the book characters assists in exploring emotions and understanding behaviors. This supports improved communication enhancing family relationships.

Watching a movie which addresses the loss being experienced can also assist with individual, family and group healing. Often watching a movie will encourage individuals and family members to seek additional information through written stories and educational materials.

There are many excellent books but often we do not know where to locate appropriate stories or movies. Your local school or community librarian can help with recommendations. Researching on the internet can also be helpful.

Some books and stories recommended at: thestephancenter.org:

CHILDREN:

- * Aarvy Aardvark Finds Hope by Donna O'Toole (Celo Press,)
- * The Accident by C. Carrick (Seabury Press,)
- * About Gramma by Vaunda M. Nelson (So China Printing)
- * Am I Still a Sister? by Alicia M. Sims (Sims Publications)
- * An Elephant in the Living Room by Jill Hastings and Marion Tuppo (CompCare Press)
- * Charlotte's Web by E. B. White (Harper & Row, 1952; also on DVD)

TEENS:

- * Tuesdays With Morrie by Mitch Albom (Random House)
- * The Last Lecture by Randy Pausch (Hyperion Press)
- * The Five People You Meet in Heaven by Mitch Albom (Random House)

ADULTS:

- * Recovering from the Loss of a Parent by Katharine Fair Donnelly
- * May I Walk You Home by Joyce Rupp
- * Not Just Another Day by Missy Lowery
- * Does Anyone Hurt This Bad and Live by Carlene Vester Eneroth